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ABSTRACT

The model for internships in school administration came from other professional fields, particularly medicine. Internship programs for master's degree candidates have generally focused on middle-management positions, such as school principal. Often such programs have been offered by local and county school districts, independently of teacher-training institutions. On the other hand, university-based internships have usually been doctoral degree programs focused on top-level administrative assignments. There is a need to reflect systematically on the concept of internships as they relate to apparent changing patterns of leadership development and training. As leadership programs change in response to the varying needs of the systems of education, the function and structure of internships also will change. Careful chronicling of that change and subsequent review of resulting modifications in internships would be helpful in establishing a foundation on which to build a more precise description of alternative internship structures, of how they work, and of what their impact might be. (Author/JG)

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INTERNSHIPS AS A MEANS OF TRAINING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS:
AN HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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Public education in the United States has been in crisis since 1950. The advent of Sputnik set up a national clamor to strengthen academic programs and produce scientists.¹ Ten years later the gathering momentum of the Civil Rights movement forced an unprecedented restructuring of long-accepted institutional patterns and behaviors. In the 1970's shrinking financial support for education and increasing demand for fiscal and program accountability wrenched an already strained, unstable system.

Each wave of educational, social or financial crisis has brought a compounding of the intensity of crises. Out of the maelstroms of crises have spun frenetic and accelerated changes. The public school's ability to positively respond to those crises has been constrained by the fact that it is a public institution.²

The response of leadership training institutions to the compounding of crises, for the most part, has been uniform and appears to have worked to preserve the status quo. Historically most leadership preparation programs in the professions have had a primary mission of transmitting an established body of knowledge or skills from one generation to the next.³ With conservation as a keystone, training institutions have, however, moved to extend the potential impact of burgeoning education leaders by offering field experiences called internships.

¹See, for example, Mark Travaglini, "In the Wake of Sputnik," American Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, January-February 1975, pp.26-28.

²W.O. Stanley offers his idea of the great dilemma of public education in observing that because public education cannot lead in social change it is in crisis and because it is in crisis it cannot lead in social change. W.O. Stanley, The Integration of Education, New York. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1952, p.21.

³"A Report on the NASSP Administrative Internship Project," NASSP Bulletin, Vol.53, January 1969, p.9.

Internships--Up From the Medical Model

The model for internships in school administration came from other professional fields. The idea of internships apparently was brought to the United States during the latter part of the 19th Century by medical students who had studied in Europe. There the term "intern" had been used to designate students who boarded at the school where they studied, as contrasted to "externs" who studied at a school, but did not board there.⁴ Over the years the term "internship" came to mean a period of professional education designed to help a student make the difficult transition from studies in school to actual practice in the profession.

By the turn of the century, internships in medicine had become well established in the United States. More recently internships have begun to find their way into other professions, such as teaching, school administration, public administration, library science, the ministry, nursing and social welfare.

Apparently internships in educational administration first were formally discussed by the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration during its first annual conference in 1947. Prior to that conference universities had regularly provided internships while a few others had occasionally offered experiences which they labeled "internships." For the majority of university representatives at the conference, internships in school administration represented a promising, but untried, development.⁵

⁴The use of the term "extern" has been applied to at least one school administrator preparation program at Michigan State University. See, for example, Byron Hansford and Fred Vescolani, "Talking Shop At Weekend Seminars," The School Executive, April 1958, pp.56-58.

⁵Newell, et al., "Internships in School Administration," Nation's Schools, Vol.50, Number 5, November 1952, p.51. Newell recorded the fact that professors of educational administration held widely divergent views as to the value of internships and recounted that some felt that internships were not feasible.

By 1948 five universities inaugurated internship programs. These five programs offered broad ranges of experiences and were diverse.⁶ Some prescribed that an intern should carry extensive administrative responsibilities. Some provided only for observation. Some arranged for supervision of the intern by a sponsoring administrator and university coordinator. Others offered no supervision.

Some provided for an intern to be paid a full administrative salary; others paid no salary. Some gave substantial amounts of academic credit. Others offered no academic credit.

Internships and Leadership Training

However, internship experiences which have been structured within the context of leadership development, often have not been viewed as a vital component in leadership training programs. Constraints of financial support and academic credibility have strongly impacted on internship programs. Little appears to have been accomplished as sponsoring agencies and training institutions have worked to define anticipated outcomes or behaviors.⁷

University affords settings which foster teaching and inquiry into fundamental aspects of knowledge--principles of design rather than particulars of design practice, study of human nature rather than intensive counseling of particular communities or groups, or theories of organizational dynamics rather than techniques of managing bureaucracies. Education as an academic discipline is tied directly to practice. With an essentially bi-modal

⁶Those programs appear to have encompassed just about all of the possible models for internships which developed over the next 25 years. Only until the early 1970's have internship programs changed basic prototype structures to include a number of distinct alterations.

⁷Louis Barrileaux, "Behavioral Outcomes for Administrative Internships: School Principals," Educational Administration Quarterly, Winter 1972, p.60. Also see Robert P. Moser, "The Administrative Internship: Tri-Dimensional Accountability," Know How, Vol.24, Numbers 3 & 4, November, December 1972, pp.1-5.

character it fits somewhere between a professional school whose primary purpose is to train practitioners and an academic faculty to train researchers as a means of extending the discipline's field of knowledge.

A number of internship and/or field experiences have been available to master's degree candidates who aspire to middle-management roles in school administration, most often principals and supervisors.⁸ Local and county school districts have focused especially on training for middle-management positions, i.e. the principalship and have developed specially tailored experiences for promising administrators. Often such programs function independent of training institutions. They reflect a belief that administrators selected from the teaching ranks of local schools have a more thorough knowledge of a community, its educational climate and role expectations for its school administrators.⁹

On the other hand, university-based internships have tended to focus on top level administrative assignments and most often are offered to doctoral candidates. Comparatively small numbers of doctoral students in school administration make internship placements relatively easy and do not stretch faculty resources. Placement of highly trained individuals assures a sponsoring agency of high levels of service and performance in return for financial

⁸For example Providence College requires that each candidate for a master's degree in school supervision participate in an internship program, so as to give those candidates experience in actual school situations. T.F. Flaherty, "Theory and Practice Yields Qualified Administrators," Education, Vol.93, November 1972, p.128.

⁹For a thorough review of a school system-based internship program for prospective principals, see Gail E. Cosgrove and Stuart A. Marshall, "Homegrown Administrators," The American School Board Journal, Vol.155, Number 4, October 1967, p.21.

support.¹⁰

The apparent emphasis on internships at doctoral levels stems partly from the dominant pattern of leadership development in school administration. By the time most persons have reached the level of doctoral studies in school administration, they likely will have passed through the ranks of teacher, principal and perhaps central office administrator.¹¹ Their cumulative experience oftentimes has obviated need for a planned marriage of theory and practice. The underlying assumption is that service in these former roles already has developed in the individual competencies and insights which might have resulted from an internship.¹²

Internships in school administration have responded to needs articulated by local education agencies. At the same time internship programs often have not been anticipatory, just as most leadership training programs generally have not anticipated requirements of a changing leadership milieu. Changes in models of administrator preparation programs from industrial/business to social/behavioral/political closely parallel changing leadership requirements

¹⁰Most university school administration preparation programs attempt to glean promising young men from those who are pursuing a doctorate in educational administration and place them for an internship in an educational environment under the tutelage of a recognized administrator. See, for example, John R. Reed, "The Administrative Intern," Pennsylvania School Journal, Vol.119, November 1970, p.156.

¹¹This idea is often reinforced in the literature of the 1960's and appears to have reflected a pervasive and deeply-held belief about successful career patterns in school administration. See, for example, Beatrice O'Brien, "Administrator Development," The National Elementary Principal, Vol.45, Number 5, April 1966, pp.72-74, especially p.73.

¹²See, for example, Hansford and Vescolani, op.cit. who point out that this assumption often tends to weaken the potential impact of an internship program. See also Ernest O. Melby, "Tomorrow's Administrator Will Be Community Engineer," Nation's Schools, Vol.50, Number 5, November 1952, p.61. Professor Melby comments that " . . . preparation for so involved a complex a task as that of educational administration must of necessity be placed on an experience basis. . . ."

growing out of an increasingly dynamic, complex society.¹³

Internships--Form and Function

The contemporary internship in school administration has its roots in turn-of-the-century medical internships. Over the years the basic form the internship in school administration has changed little. Ordinarily it occurs at the end of a formal academic-based training period and serves to fill voids of experience for potential administrators. Most often it is supported by a cooperative effort between a training institution and a host agency.¹⁴

The literature reflects a concern that internship experiences be the hands on kind, which may be either in-depth or broad. The literature also reflects clear support for the benefits of "marrying theory and practice" in a controlled, supervised situation.¹⁵ Supervision of an intern's hands on experience ordinarily rests with an immediate superior or with a university or training institution representative, or with both.

An effect of the internship which the literature largely ignores is that of a "telescoping" phenomenon. Often internships offer to individuals opportunities to delve into and explore a number of administrative assignments. It is not uncommon for an intern, in a single year, to have gained a working understanding of and to have developed competencies in a number of administrative areas and functions. In short the internship may have telescoped or

¹³At the turn of the century, "Students were likened to raw material, teachers were equated with industrial workers, and the school administrator was thought of as the manager or supervisor." John W. Bennion, "The School Superintendent As Philosopher," School and Society, Vol.98, January 1970, p.25.

¹⁴See Daniel R. Davies, The Internship in Educational Administration, Washington, D.C.: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1962, especially the opening chapter.

¹⁵T.F. Flaherty, op.cit. See also, Ron Dougherty, "Internships For Future Administrators," American Vocational Journal, Vol.46, Number 1, January 1971, p.50.

compressed many years' worth of broad understandings and skills in a relatively short time.¹⁶

The literature reflects no interest in the telescoping phenomenon. Its virtual silence suggests some tenuity in raising the issue due to strong sentiment within the education profession that educators should go through the chairs.¹⁷ Nowhere is found an assertion that internships either could, or should compress experiences so as to substitute for long periods of on-the-job experience except on an experimental basis.¹⁸

As generally conceived and structured, most internships have commonality. Most require that interns keep a journal or record of their experiences; involve joint planning between intern and university supervisor and between intern and supervising sponsor; require a critique, often an evaluation offered by persons involved in the internship activities.

¹⁶For example the author was an administrative intern in the office of the superintendent of schools in an urban center in Michigan. In the span of twelve months, the author worked with or experienced almost every level of administration in a public school system---from principal to supervisor, to assistant superintendent, to the superintendency itself. The practical effect of that experience was compression of several years of broad experiences into a year's time. The experience was carefully planned and consistently supported by the superintendent, who became the intern's mentor.

¹⁷For a careful review of the reasons why "going through the chairs" is a pervasive and important value in public education, see Laurence Iannoccone, "Political, Social, and Cultural Constraints Upon Financing Improved Urban Education and Proposals to Overcome Them," Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington, D.C., Contract No.OEC-0-71-2718, especially pp.13-42.

¹⁸Out of collaboration between the American Association of School Administrators and the University Council for Educational Administration emerged a document entitled "The Internship in Administrative Preparation: Some Action Guides," Action Guide Number 13 states "On an experimental basis, the internship may be tried as a procedure for telescoping experience for carefully selected students for whom the long experience route to an administrative position seems inappropriate. Such experimental efforts, however, should be carefully designed, evaluated, and reported to the profession at large."

Most of the literature regarding internships tends to be prescriptive. Journals abound with assertions and designs about what constitutes "optimal" or credible internship experiences. Authors and researchers have been content to offer up the kinds of structures and processes which "ought to" provide interns with productive and positive experiences. A number of model or prescriptive internship structures exist, a few of which are supported by interinstitutional agencies.¹⁹

The internship concept is based upon the theory of learning by doing under competent and realistic guidance. An administrative intern serves in an administrative post under tutelage of an experienced practitioner and a university sponsor. Built into the concept is university-institution collaboration which embodies a marriage of theory and practice. An essential characteristic of the internship is frequent interaction between the intern, the supervising administrator, and the university sponsor. As the intern fulfills the responsibilities of the assignment, numerous opportunities exist to test theoretical ideas under the watchful eye of a supervising administrator.

Interns are expected to make worthwhile contributions to the system in which they serve. The intern maintains a daily log of activities and regularly appraises performance on the job. The intern reports on experiences.

Built into the internship concept are basic objectives involving practical experiences for the intern in carrying out routine administrative tasks and significant projects with long-range implications. Other objectives include motivation of the intern and supervising administrator to expand and improve

¹⁹Ibid. The American Association of School Administrators is a national organization which represents over 21,000 school district superintendents. The University Council for Educational Administration is an organization of institutions which prepare school administrators.

competencies in conducting research and utilizing findings and to encourage the intern to experiment in the development and use of personal, technical, interpersonal and managerial competencies.²⁰

The activity log kept by the intern is a tool utilized to regularly appraise the intern's progress. Regular visits by the sponsor focus upon the basic question of "How are we doing?" At the end of a certain time period the intern, the supervising administrator(s) and the university sponsor engage in formal evaluation procedures.

It is clear that a primary objective of an internship is one of learning. The focus of the internship program is learning for the intern.²¹ That a cooperating education agency might try to exploit the competencies of an intern is a danger to that primary objective. Its desire may be one of exacting intern services rather than providing a setting which is learning oriented.²²

Exceptions to the prototype model of internship exist, but are not numerous. For example, Daniel Davies has identified the "apprenticeship" which he suggests is an internship not connected directly to a university or training institution.²³ Under Davies' definition the administrator training program which was operated by the Framingham, Massachusetts Public Schools would be called an "apprenticeship" program.²⁴

²⁰A number of ancillary objectives could easily be added to these basic ones. For a review of other possible objectives, see Robert P. Moser, "The Administrative Intern: The Marriage of Theory and Practice," Wisconsin School News, Wisconsin Association of School Boards, December 1971.

²¹Daniel R. Davies, op.cit., p.32.

²²Samuel A. Moore II, "Who Expects What From the Internship?," Peabody Journal of Education, Vol.44, Number 5, March 1967, p.281.

²³Daniel R. Davies, op.cit., p.2.

²⁴See fn 8.

Another exception to the common internship model is the "extern program" which was initiated by The Michigan State University. During the "extern program" practicing school administrators who were enrolled in a doctoral program in educational administration came together with leaders in school administration on weekend retreats for protracted and intensive seminars, group discussions and meetings.

The "extern program" was developed mostly in response to serious deficiencies which were felt to exist in the internship concept. Concern was raised that the internship could not be a real-life situation because the responsibility always remained with the superintendent or principal. It was felt also that intern opportunities were limited, because only a few school systems were organized for internships and only larger schools were chosen to participate, while most beginning administrators started in small systems. Finally a lack of follow-up was cited as a major drawback to such programs.²⁵

Internships--Outside the Public Schools

Internships have not been limited to just public school systems or to academic degree programs. The concept of using internships to develop administrative leadership has extended to institutions of higher education. At least two such programs have been reviewed in the literature. A program known as Michigan Fellows in College Administration was limited to post-doctoral fellows with interest in higher education administration. Its prominent characteristic was that it was comparatively informal and not closely supervised.²⁶

More widely-known and more often reviewed in the literature is the Academic Administration Internship Program sponsored by the American Council

²⁵For a review of the "extern program" at The Michigan State University, see Byron Hensford and Fred Vescolani, op.cit.

²⁶"Internships For Future College Administrators," School and Society, Vol.94, Summer 1966, pp.258, 260.

on Education.²⁷ The host campus selects an appropriate "mentor" with whom the AAIP fellow works for a calendar year. The mentor ordinarily is the host institution's President or chief academic officer, who in the opinion of AAIP staff becomes the key to a successful internship.²⁸ The purpose of AAIP is to give to Fellows an opportunity to learn about or participate in administration at the top level; the nature of educational leadership; administrative organization; relationships between the several levels of administrative officers; how decisions are reached at various levels and how final recommendations are made to top administrative persons and the trustees; management practices; management information systems; and organizational behavior.

Sometimes training institutions or universities arrange internship assignments in agencies outside education institutions. For example while enrolled in a doctoral program in educational administration, the author served as an education intern in a state governor's office. This was a unique opportunity and served special needs of both the governor's office and the intern. Undoubtedly a number of internships have developed out of extraordinary circumstances but they have not been reported in the literature.

Occasionally universities and state departments of education cooperate in offering internship programs. Special agencies within state departments of education generally can provide funds to support interns and programs can range over varying lengths of time, anywhere from several weeks to a semester or a

²⁷A broad framework of the program is outlined in "Guidelines," The Academic Administration Internship Program, Office of Leadership Development in Higher Education, American Council on Education, pp.1-5. The AAIP is supported by a grant from the Lilly Foundation and was initially underwritten by the Ford Foundation.

²⁸Charles G. Dobbins and Thomas M. Stauffer, "Academic Administrators--Born or Made?," Educational Record, Vol.53, Number 4, Fall 1972, p.296.

year. Activities may range from observation, to participation, to work activities, or they may be a combination of any or all.²⁹

Institutions other than universities, public school systems, or state departments of education also have supported planned internships. One of the most prominent of these is Washington Internships in Education (WIE). Supported by the Ford Foundation, WIE meets the general criteria of internships set out in the literature. In addition its combined state capitol and Washington bases and focus on policy analysis and development at the state and federal levels, set it apart and make it unique.

Internships--A Changing Pattern of Leadership Development

A small number of internship-like programs and field experiences are being developed which reflect what appears to be a fundamental change in the patterns of education leadership development. In response partly to urgent contemporary needs of public school systems and partly in response to newly emerging flexibility in career development in professions related to education, increased attention is being given to the phenomenon of mid-career shifts and changes. Apparently for the first time, school administrators are searching for ways of systematically regenerating after extended periods of practice. Likewise some educational leaders have begun to look to other professions--law, business, the ministry, and public administration--for individuals who are successful, are committed to solving problems of education, and might willingly initiate a career shift.

The Ohio State University, along with related institutions and agencies, currently is involved in developing and operating programs to serve school

²⁹Kenneth R. Blessing, "A State Department - University Approach in Providing Internship Experiences for Prospective Leadership Personnel in Special Education," Exceptional Children, Vol.32, Number 5, January 1966, p.305.

administrators, who at mid-career, wish to take time to regenerate, to consider in an intensive manner futurism in the field and to draw upon the rich resources of academe.³⁰ At the same time efforts continue to refinance and revitalize the National Program for Educational Leadership (NPEL), an Office of Education funded project designed to identify, recruit and train persons from outside the field of education and place them as urban school administrators.³¹ Each of the 100 NPEL Fellows selected for the internship type experience was a successful careerist who felt a need to do something different. Each had been involved in some manner with education and evidenced strong personal commitment to its improvement.

Out of the experiences of NPEL and the Ford Mid-Career Program has emerged a somewhat altered view of field experiences as they support, extend or help to develop education leadership. For example, concern for issues of accountability has resulted in program designs which require the intern to assume fully-developed responsibilities with accountability clearly spelled out. Location of field experiences congenial to developing strength among the members of a specially designed collegial learning community is increasingly critical. Criticizing the performance and behaviors of the persons who hold membership in this collegial community becomes the foundation for that process.³²

³⁰Mid-Career Component, Urban Education Leadership Program, The Ohio State University, Columbus

³¹Formerly NPEL, the program currently is part of the National College Leadership Program, The Ohio State University, Columbus

³²Luvern L. Cunningham, "Clinical Experience as a Part of Professional Training: Special Reference to Mid-Career," an unpublished paper prepared for the Conference on Mid-Career Internships in Education sponsored by the Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C., January 23-24, 1975.

In addition leaders in the training of educational administrators appear to be looking increasingly to pools of talent different from that of the past. The basic pattern of leadership development is being altered by a dramatic infusion of persons from outside the profession. They embody a collective eagerness to develop new careers and to redirect energies which might have become weak or listless. Their related skills, refined talents and considerable experiences offer opportunity for transposing relatively small amounts of training into enormous potential for education change and reform.

Internship--Questions for the Future

Need exists to reflect systematically on the concept of internships as they relate to apparent changing patterns of leadership development and training. What presently exists in the literature relative to the worth and benefits of the internship is largely testimonial and little empirical data is available.³³ Critical, dispassionate inquiry into the administrative internship needs to be made.

For example, what impact will the recent attention given to competency-based teacher education have on the training of education leaders? Clearly administrative competencies will provide specific guidelines for administrator selection and preparation. If structured field experiences continue to play a part in training school administrators, competency-based administrator education will impact on those structures.³⁴ In the future academic-based,

³³ Samuel A. Moore II, op.cit., p.279.

³⁴ As part of a shift to competency-based teacher education in the State of Florida, local education agencies, charged by the state legislature with collaboration with training institutions in shaping professional preparation programs, has begun to develop a catalogue of administrator competencies, having completed a catalogue of teacher competencies. Interview with Robert L. Bakke, Registrar and Director of Admissions, NOVA University, May 24, 1974.

prescriptive, internship models and their relevance to needs of the next two decades and resulting leadership requirements will have to be carefully examined.

Another issue may develop over the role or position of the intern. Possible changes in the experiential or training levels of interns may require adjustment of their participation in the planning and evaluation of a field experience. Internships in the past have served to provide hands on experiences to novice administrators and the faculty member or supervisor was the expert and teacher. Increasing numbers of persons with refined administrative skills and abilities who often have attained high education levels, will approach tasks of assessing personal and professional needs from different perspectives and in planning selected experiences will alter the roles of all of those involved in the process of internship.

There is need to assess the value of the telescoping effect of internships. Is it possible to determine the soundness of the concept? Is the concept saleable? Is the concept practical in changing the process of choosing and preparing educational leaders?

As financial support for education shrinks in the face of static tax levels and mounting costs, measurement of the benefits of internships supported by public funds becomes an important issue. The internship concept has been so widely accepted by the professions, including educational administration, that examination of internship programs in terms of cost/benefit has not been widespread. Such examination would be useful in helping to assess the larger question of the impact of internships generally.

Each of the parties in a field or internship experience has a stake in the process. Each party expects to give something and in return expects to get more than was given. Each party would expect to be changed somehow by the experience. A timely assessment of the internship's impact on the

three participants might yield relevant and important information such as answers to the following:

How has the nature of the intern's disposition toward his next professional employment changed,

How has the perspective of the academic supervisor regarding practice in the field changed and how has that impacted on his world of theory and ideas, and

How has the host administrator been changed by his work with the intern? Has new information and fresh thinking been injected into field practice? Has the world of ideas found a willing and effective carrier of the good news to the field?

Whether by design or historical evolvement internships have developed as an accepted component of leadership preparation programs. As those leadership programs change in response to the varying needs of the systems of education, the function and structure of internships also will change. Careful chronicling of that change and subsequent review of resulting modifications in internships would be helpful in establishing a foundation upon which to build a more precise description of alternative internship structures and of how they work and of what their impact might be.

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